

A NEW SPECIES OF LASIACIS (GRAMINEAE)

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As a result of a study of the genus Lasiacis (Davidse, 1972), one new species has been recognized which in the previous treatment of the genus (Hitchcock, 1920) had been included in the widespread Lasiacis sorghoidea (Desv.) Hitchc. & Chase. A full monographic treatment of the genus will soon be published; however, the new species, especially common in Central America and southern Mexico, is described at this time so that the name may be validly used in other published accounts.

LASIACIS NIGRA Davidse, sp. nov.

Gramen perenne. Culmi usque ad 8 m longi, arcuti, scandentes. Foliorum vaginæ pilosae variantes ad glabras; colla pilosa, puberula vel glabra; ligulae 0.5-1.3(-2.0) mm longae; laminae lineares vel lanceolatae, 5-11(-15) cm longae, (0.3-)0.6-1.8(-2.6) cm latae, plerumque pilosae vel puberulae vel glabrae. Paniculae (2-)5-12(-19) cm longae; rami longissimi 1-8(-11) cm; rami ascendentes vel divergentes ferentes spiculas paucas pedicellis longis; pedicelli patentes ad maturitatem. Spiculae obovatae, (3.6-)4.0-5.0(-5.5) mm longae. Glumae inferiores (1.6-)2.0-2.7(-3.2) mm longae, 5-13-nerves; glumae superiores 7-13-nerves. Flosculi inferiores staminati vel steriles; lemmata 9-11-nervia; antherae rudimentales vel 2.3-2.7 mm longae. Flosculi superiores 3.8-4.6 mm longi, 2.5-2.9 mm lati; antherae 2.1-2.8 mm longae. Caryopses 2.4-2.7 mm longae, 1.9-2.4 mm latae. Chromosomatum numerus $n=18$.

Type: COSTA RICA. Alajuela: 3 km N of Palmares along the Carretera Interamericana, 800 m, edge of coffee plantation, culms 8 m tall, hanging from trees, 22 Oct 1968, Pohl & Davidse 11272 (Holotype: ISC; isotypes: CR, EAP, K, MO, US).

Lasiacis nigra is a montane species primarily found along forest edges, in roadside thickets and among similar secondary woody vegetation. Most elevation records are between 900-2300 m. The species extends from Sinaloa, southern Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas in Mexico south throughout Central America. In northwestern South America, it occurs in an arc from Ecuador through Colombia and into Venezuela.

Lasiacis nigra is a segregate species from the very variable, widespread L. sorghoidea (sensu Hitchcock, 1920). It is more delicate and scandent than L. sorghoidea, has smaller leaves and inflorescences but larger spikelets, and has inflorescences bearing relatively few, large, long-pedicelled spikelets giving them an open appearance. On the other hand, L. sorghoidea typically has large, moderately dense inflorescences with many small spikelets on short pedicels. The most common type of leaf pubescence pattern in L. sorghoidea is one in which the sheaths are papillose-hispid, the collar is densely hispid, the lower blade surface is velutinous, and the upper blade surface is puberulent or hispidulous. This pattern is rarely encountered in L. nigra in which pubescence varies from nearly glabrous to densely pilose.

The specific epithet refers to the shining black color of the mature spikelets of this, as well as all other species of Lasiacis. The importance of this character in fruit dispersal has been discussed by Davidse & Morton (1973).

Literature Cited

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